AMERICA'S RED CROSS SHIP AND HER ERRAND OF MERCY

A Bright Spot Against War's Dark Masses Is This Expedition, Representing Much Toil and Devotion, Which Puts Forth in the Name of Humanity.

WHEN the steamship Red Cross was ready to start for Europe last week the American people situated within hearing were threatened with all the dangers contained in chronic noise. Our medical advisers in America, as well as in Germany, have long since drawn attention to the fact that continuous exposure to noise can, even in the healthy individual, produce serious physical disturbances.

Continuous exposure to noise is what the people of Eastern America underwent early last week. On Monday the steamship Red Cross, filled with nurses, surgeons and everything that trained experts could imagine might be useful in caring for the wounded, steamed up the Hudson River to her anchorage off 96th st. It was intended that she should start for Europe the next day at noon.

Everything about the present war is the greatest, longest, loudest and largest that the world has ever seen. The noise that was made when the Red Cross steamed up the river was of the dimensions to fit that kind of war. It was December 31, at midnight. It was Roosevelt back from the African jungle. It was Wilbur Wright, the first man to fly anywhere, for the first time flying over the Hudson from Governor's Island to Grant's Tomb.

NOISE WAS EXPECTED, AND THERE WAS NO DISAPPOINTMENT.

It was expected when the Red Cross went away for good the next day, as was first planned, that the good she was going away to do, having soaked itself into the consciousness of millions of people overnight, would result in there being added to the noises of Monday those of election night when Tammany wins and the Fourth of July as it used to be before all that made it attractive to the small boy had been extruded by committee.

The point is that the movements of the steamship Red Cross were accompanied by noise. Arguments about the nationality of the crew have delayed her departure, which only tends to increase the enthusiasm of her friends.

In mid-Atlantic, her funnels painted white, except for Greek crosses in red, she will make a beautiful appearance. Her hull is white, except for a scarlet sash two feet wide from bow to stern. In these days, when it is the fashion to paint vessels gray-black, put out all lights at night, pick up wireless messages, but send none, sit as low on the horizon as extreme mental concentration by the passengers—of which there aren't any—and crew can achieve, the Red Cross will be the brightest object, both night and day, on all the seven seas.

She will be without an enemy on land and water. The finest target, there is in no nation a man so depraved as to smudge her spotless decks. The poor chaps on the other side, tossed about on beds of pain, their imaginations fevered, will look upon the steamship Red Cross as having brought a cargo of angels. And their imaginations won't have to be so fevered, either.

ON BOARD THE RED CROSS—THE TEARLESS GOODBYS.

We boarded the Hamburg-American tug No. 2 at the Battery in what seemed a forty-mile gale—well, thirty-nine, anyway—and lurched across the harbor to South Brooklyn at 2:30 o'clock, where the Red Cross was lying at 33d st. On the tug were officials of the American Red Cross and of the Hamburg-American Line, which has lent the steamship, formerly known as the Hamburg, to the American Red Cross for as long as it may be required.

On board the Red Cross nurses dressed in gray and wearing white caps were completely surrounded by fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, cousins and aunts, sweethearts and those willing to be, all buzzing like a church social, each nurse the centre of a group, each group unconscious of the pushing and crowding by those anxious to become members of a similar group, everybody talking at once, flowers being hurried up the gangplank, mail being distributed in the cabin forward, surgeons in Norfolk jackets and riding breeches undergoing the same processes as the nurses and bearing them splendidly, but not a whit better.

There were a million instructions to write often, two blasts from the whistle, kisses and kisses and hugs, a rush back for a final grip of the hand, no tears, more kisses and a scramble for shore, because now it was 4 o'clock and the first leg of the journey had begun.

Everybody had been engaged in cheering everybody up.

"Well, goodby," said a pretty girl, eighteen years old, to a nurse whose hair was gray. "I hope you have a v-e-r-y pleasant—sojourn abroad."

Knowing as the girl did what the nurse was going to and what she would see when she got there, the remark, in cold type, does not look to be even intelligent. But to one who saw the expression on the girl's face and heard the remark the transaction was not only eminently proper but affecting. The girl did hope her aunt would have a pleasant time. The fact that she probably would not, and that both the girl and the aunt knew it, was the precise reason why referring to the fact at such a moment was carefully avoided.

Thousands of people stood on the dock as the ship was backed by a tug into midstream. Moving picture men, standing on top of the pilot house of a snorting tug, turned the cranks of their machines at the risk of being tossed overboard. While they took moving pictures of the ship passengers took pictures of the moving picture men.

Each nurse carried an American flag. There were 125 of them lined along the port side. Each nurse was trying to wave her flag at those persons who, a few moments before, had made up that little group on deck in which she had been the centre of attraction, the pride of them all.

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE ACTIVE AMERICAN FLAGS.

They waved frantically from the dock. One hundred and twenty-five flags jumped up and down sympathetically from the ship's side. Everybody pointed; everybody yelled goodby again and again. The steamship blew her whistle; the tug blew just as often and twice as hard.

Faces on the dock became dimmer—but not through tears. There were no tears. The curriculum does not include tears. There may have been some in the staterooms, but the reporters were not told about them.

Each ship we passed as she lay at her dock along the South Brooklyn waterfront dipped her colors. We passed all nations, including the Scandinavian. And canal boats. They had no colors, except that their cargoes of brick were red. So the man and his wife and children and their dog waved and wagged, cheered and barked.

It was very sincere and inspiring. Docks that at such an hour would have been deserted otherwise were filled with people. A daring sailboat, about the size of a mantelpiece ornament, cut across our bow, our whistle denoting our anxiety and displeasure, the three men in the little boat calling out words of godspeed to all on board.

CONEY ISLAND PAYS HER RESPECTS TO THE RED CROSS IDEA.

A Coney Island boat, her passengers all on the port side, sent a rousing cheer across the water to the Red Cross, and a series of three blasts, which is the form that "I salute thee" takes at sea, was begun that did not stop throughout the two hours, from 4 until 6 o'clock, in which the steamship Red Cross was going up the river.

The only vessel that did not blow her whistle was the Sandy Hook, coming up from the Jersey coast resorts, and apparently she did not want to lose speed. The dredge of the Coastwise Dredging Company, at work in midstream north of Quarantine, seeming to notice this omission, made up for it by turning on her whistle and letting it stay on until we had passed out of hearing.

We on board wondered how we must look from shore. The Battery was lined with people who knew. White and scarlet, the sun slanting across the steamship those last rays that had not been absorbed by the Statue of Liberty directly upon our left, we knew that we must be beautiful.

From both sides of the river triple blasts were shot at us continuously. Each salute must be answered. Each salute was. Conversation on board was postponed. It wasn't the kind of thing that one could talk about anyway.

ENGLISH, GERMAN, FRENCH AND RUSSIAN SALUTES ALL SOUND ALIKE.

There is no denying that there is a thrill in staccato salutations from English, German, French, Russian and South American ships, coast ships, ferryboats, boats for Boston, motor boats, railroad transfers and the Washington Irving from Albany. There were hundreds of boats, all tooting the regulation three times, and our man doing his best to keep pace with them and succeeding throughout. Unless one is a Roosevelt and has heard a similar demonstration caused by the appearance of one's self at the mast head, there is no getting away from it that the effect is powerful, and for the most part is felt in the region of the spinal column.

Miss Jane A. Delano, chairman of the general nursing service of the American Red Cross, who supervised the mobilization of the forces, explained the system whereby thousands of trained nurses all over the country are enrolled with the American Red Cross and may be called on for service. The nurses who have gone on the present expedition have been chosen out of five thousand applicants.

The 120 nurses represent ten units, each of which has three doctors also. The five extra nurses are to take the places of those who may become ill. The 127 come from Manhattan, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Connecticut, New Jersey, Rochester, Albany and Buffalo. All of them are American born, and have been selected with special regard to physical fitness for the service. Those who met other requirements and knew other languages than English were considered especially fitted for the work they are to do.

MISS HELEN SCOTT HAY, GENERAL SUPERVISOR OF THE EXPEDITION.

Miss Helen Scott Hay, who was chosen by the Queen of Bulgaria to oversee the building of a hospital in that country, is general supervisor of the expedition. Assisting her is Miss Katrina E. Hertzer and Miss Josephine B. Bowman. These nurses on the Red Cross are not correspondence school graduates.

"How do I feel about the expedition?" said Mrs. M. H. Metcalfe, of Chicago. "Why, I feel that it is an adventure. I know how serious it is and I realize there is hard work to do and horrible suffering to see. But for all that, I'm a-tingle with the excitement of it and can hardly wait to be off.

"It isn't for the excitement that we're enlisting," said Miss Margaret G. Egan, of Brooklyn, "though we know we shall be in the thick of the war. No woman is allowed on the field, but we shall be assigned to the emergency hospitals to which the wounded are brought. We have no fear, any of us."

Each nurse promises to remain six months. If she returns sooner she pays her own expenses. If the war lasts longer than six months all those who desire will be returned and others sent in their places. They will receive $60 a month, so they are making financial sacrifices.

It will cost the Red Cross $16,000 a month, says Miss Mabel T. Boardman, secretary of the American branch of the world society of that name, to keep in the field the nurses that are being sent on this expedition. The cost of fitting out the ship is a small part of the expense.

A WHOLESALE SUPPLY OF ABSORBENT COTTON, GAUZE, BANDAGES AND ETHER.

On the ship are 400,000 pounds of absorbent and non-absorbent cotton, more than 200,000 metres of gauze, more than 50,000 metres of starched gauze for splints, 15,000 pounds of bandages, 30,000 gallons of iodine, 2,000 cans of ether, 2,000 cans of chloroform, 48 dozen pairs of rubber gloves, and thousands of ligatures.

Each nurse is furnished by the society with an equipment, including six gray chambray uniforms, twelve white aprons, six collars, four caps, brassard, uniform cape of blue lined with red, uniform hat, gray wool sweater, work, shoe and laundry bags, steamer rug and canvas bag to carry these. Aside from the canvas bag, each nurse was allowed to take only baggage which she could carry herself.

Major Robert U. Patterson, Medical Corps, U. S. A., is in charge of all surgeons and nurses of the expedition, as chief, bureau of medical service, American Red Cross. The number of surgeons to go on the first trip was limited to thirty. Those chosen are young men. They were instructed to place in a suitcase or light travelling bag, which, it was emphasized, they would carry themselves, sufficient clothing to last one month. The remainder of each doctor's clothing was placed in a canvas bag, which had a suitable lock attached, and was furnished him in New York.

The Red Cross reimbursed each doctor for the uniforms they purchased not to exceed $68 75. The uniforms that each obtained consisted of the following:

Two uniform suits Norfolk suits and riding breeches.

Two pairs tan shoes.

One or two pairs canvas leggings.

One campaign hat.

Two flannel shirts.

One overcoat, of the same color cloth, cut in any double breasted civilian style, which buttons up close to the neck.

Before sailing, the Red Cross furnished each doctor with a special passport signed by the State Department, which he must keep with him constantly in a suitable receptacle. A Red Cross brassard is worn on the left arm.

If a doctor had not already had typhoid fever, said Dr. Patterson, or the anti-typhoid prophylactic treatment administered, he was requested to take his first dose before leaving his home, and as many of the other doses as practicable before sailing. It was arranged to have the prophylaxis given in New York to those who desired it. If the treatment was not completed before sailing, Dr. Patterson said it would be administered on the way to Europe.

Directors of units are paid $250 a month; staff physicians, $166 a month.

UNITED STATES ARMY DISCIPLINE WILL PREVAIL ON THE SHIP.

While all the nurses and physicians have had long training to fit them for the arduous work they will undertake, they will have been put through United States army discipline before reaching the scenes of their labors.

"I am proud of this company," said Major Patterson. "The nurses, as you can tell by looking at their faces, are going because they are devoted to the work. The physicians, if youngsters, have had long experience in hospitals or practice, and they are surgeons every one.

"The discipline and directions on this ship and in the units are the same as those in the United States army. My directions are always given to Miss Hay, in charge of the nurses. The physician in charge of the hospital units will give his directions to the nurse in charge. So far as I can see every preparation has been made for the highest efficiency at the front. Sailing as we do, on a ship given over to hospital uses, I have no doubt that a fine esprit de corps will be developed which will make for devotion to duty."

The surgeon does not now wait for the end of a battle, nor does he remain in quarters some distance at the rear, says Dr. James J. Walsh, expecting the wounded to be carried to him, for the number of wounded is entirely too great for that, and the battle is waged too strenuously to permit such movements of the hospital corps.

SURGEON CRAWLING AMONG DEAD AND WOUNDED WHILE THE BATTLE RAGES.

Armed with a pocket surgical case, in which are contained a number of absolutely necessary instruments and ligatures with some antiseptics, especially iodine, and above all carrying a hypodermic syringe and a plentiful supply of morphine and other anodyne drugs, the surgeon, on hands and knees, makes his way along the rows of the dead and wounded even while the battle is raging, and, with the shots passing over him, stretches himself alongside those needing care and proceeds to help them in the best way that he can for the moment, and, surprising though it may be, under the circumstances there is very much that he can do.

These boyish looking surgeons on the Red Cross have been picked and may be depended upon to devote all day and as much of the night as they can keep awake to crawling about among the wounded and dying soldiers.

"Men can be mowed down by hundreds and even thousands," says Dr. Walsh, "with machine guns, but they have to be cared for and their sufferings relieved individually. Even the hopelessly wounded is not left to die unattended, or at least neglected, now. He is given the consoling injection of morphine, partly for the sake of others as well as himself, as the surgeon passes.

"The inhuman slaughter goes on, but the redeeming element of surgical care comes in as some consolation for it all, and at least the suffering of men in mind as well as body—the mental torture having been worse in the past than the physical pain—is relieved and they are given their best chance for recovery from their wounds."

"No one who has been in contact with the men," says a writer, "who are in the van of this great work can fail to be struck with the fact that in them the strenuousness and ardor of the scientist are mated with the devotion and humaneness of the lover of mankind.

"Along with the elevation of surgery and medicine to that high scientific plane which they now occupy has gone not a brutalization of the profession, but a more general prevalence of a high and broad humanity among its members.

"The sawbones of whom we read in 'Pickwick' were never, of course, representative of the profession, but there was a greater admixture of that sort of thing among medical students of past generations than it is easy for people to-day to believe. The higher intellectual qualifications and the more strenuous intellectual exertion that the present day standards of medicine demand have without question weeded out in a very great measure not only the more ignorant but the more callous and the more coarse-grained candidates for a medical career."

The ship will touch first at Falmouth, where twenty-four nurses (two units) and six surgeons will be landed for England. At Rotterdam two units for Russia, two for Austria and two for Germany will disembark. The nurses for France will be left at a French port. Nurses for Servia have been sent over in a Greek ship. Holland, Greece and Italy have asked the American Red Cross if there will be nurses for them in case their countries become involved in the war, and Miss Boardman hopes that when the relief ship returns it can be fitted out again and dispatched to Europe.

"Money is the thing we need," she said last Tuesday. "It is incomprehensible to me that we have not received more. In former calamities that did not touch this money has been given us in much larger quantities. I want $1,000,000 for this war, and it would be better to have $2,000,000."

As one way of raising the $1,000,000 Miss Boardman hopes, she says, to have a citizens' committee formed in New York similar to that in Washington.

"I hardly think it will be necessary to outline to the public in greater detail than I have already done," said Miss Boardman, "the untold blessings that can come through the expenditure even of a few dollars among the wounded on the field of battle. I imagine that if a man about to spend a dollar, say, for something he could just as well do without realized that just that dollar might allay the suffering of several poor soldiers who are suffering through no fault of their own he would send that dollar to us instead of squandering it."

SWITZERLAND, AN ISLE IN A SEA OF WAR

SWITZERLAND is unique among nations. It has no proper physical unity, and its political unity is the unforeseen outcome of events which occurred more than six hundred years ago. It is prosperous beyond other Continental countries, and its principal cities are undefended. Yet to-day Switzerland lies a cool oasis of peace in the midst of a burning, glaring desert of war.

Because of its small size and its lack of seacoast, the Swiss Republic has never held an important place in the ranks of the powers. However, the little country is one of the oldest in existence, and has come safely through more than six centuries of European conflicts with no lasting injury, but considerable increase of territory. Since the time when the map of Europe was adjusted as it was before the present war the four nations surrounding Switzerland have all cherished hopes of some day adding it to their territory, but none of them has dared to try it. Many Swiss fear that this war will put some nation in a position to threaten their sacred liberty.

The independence and neutrality of Switzerland are guaranteed by the powers of Europe, just as in the case of Belgium. It is her position alone which has thus far prevented an invasion by the Kaiser. It is too far from Paris to Switzerland for the uses of the present German campaign. Nevertheless, a splendid path into France lies through the western cantons, and it is there that the Swiss have massed their soldiers in case of more German treachery.

A German army could march up the valley of the Rhine into Switzerland, then follow the River Aar to the southwest and reach the tableland northeast of Lake Geneva. From that region it could move past the south end of Lake Neuchatel and enter France. No inaccessible passes or difficult country would be met with on this course and there are no fortifications of importance. Furthermore, France would be entered at a point where her defences are not strong. This way is three times as far to Paris as through Belgium. Hence Belgium suffers. It is the opinion of Swiss officers that Germany will not undertake to send an army over this route unless the allies are completely routed and the Kaiser decided to attack Paris from both south and north.

While Switzerland is maintaining a strict neutrality and hopes to avoid any part in the hostilities, public sentiment probably favors the allies. In twenty-one of the twenty-two cantons German and French are spoken by about equal numbers, while in one southern canton Italian is the chief language. All three are used in the Federal Parliament and proclamations and laws are published in them. But the inhabitants are Swiss before anything else, and any attempt to violate the neutrality of the country will meet with instant resistance.

Although there is a provision in the Swiss constitution prohibiting a standing army, the country actually has a large and most efficient body of soldiers. It numbers well over 200,000 men. Its equipment is the best. Although nominally a militia body because of the constitutional provision, it is actually a federal army.

These soldiers do not serve continuously, and there is no such thing as an enlistment for a term of years. Instead, all male citizens between fixed ages are members of the militia and serve for short periods at stated intervals. In this way every man in the country is made a good soldier without seriously interfering with his occupation. A powerful fighting force can be put in the field in a few days. Another advantage of the system is the low cost. By keeping only a small force in active service the Swiss maintain what is generally regarded as a thoroughly satisfactory military force for the low rate of about twelve francs per capita per annum. When the small population is considered this appears remarkable.

With the situation in Europe as it is, Switzerland appears to be fairly safe just now. Her greatest danger will be after the war, especially if Germany should win.

It was the House of Hapsburg, whose troubles started the terrible conflict now raging, which was directly responsible for the founding of the Helvetian Republic. The Hapsburgs were a family whose power was rapidly growing. By the middle of the thirteenth century they were in control of Austrian politics. They were large land owners in the region which is now the heart of Switzerland, and they claimed feudal rights over the inhabitants. These mountaineers refused to submit to Hapsburg rule. On August 1, 1291, the men of the three forest cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden met and formed the "Everlasting League" for the purpose of resisting the Hapsburgs. That house attempted to make war on the members of the alliance, but was completely routed in one battle a few weeks after the compact had been made.

The three cantons were aided by four adjoining districts in their first fight. From that time on other cantons and divisions joined with the original ones under the terms of the Everlasting League. The main occupation of this organization for the next two centuries was getting rid of the Hapsburg and Austrian influence. Rights as land owners were recognized, but any feudal claims were calmly ignored, and were at no time enforced successfully. In 1474 the Hapsburgs formally gave up their claims.

At that time there was a decided lack of unity in the federation, due to the wide differences between its members. It was regarded by them as a union for defence only. The retirement of the Hapsburgs was immediately followed by the Burgundian War, during the course of which Switzerland was attacked as a nation. This gave the people a national spirit and a feeling of oneness of purpose. Pressure was renewed on Austria, the only kingdom which had any claim to sovereignty over the Swiss, and in 1499 that country recognized the independence of the Swiss nation.

For the next three centuries internal troubles caused by religious differences prevented any important progress. The party which contended for renouncing the authority of the Pope and the separation of Church and State was successful, and on March 29, 1798, a new league was formed, which was referred to as "The Helvetic Republic, one and indivisible." Since that time the material progress of the country has been rapid. New constitutions were adopted in 1848 and 1874.